

**FACT SHEET
GENERAL INVESTIGATIONS STUDY**

PROJECT: Illinois River Ecosystem Restoration

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: IL-20, IL-19, IL-18, IL-17, IL-15, IL-14, IL-11

AUTHORITY: Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1970

LOCATION: Entire Illinois River Basin including tributaries.

PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED IN THE STUDY: The principal problems impeding the restoration of aquatic and associated fish and wildlife habitat in the Illinois River Basin is the loss of backwaters and side channels due to sedimentation, destabilized tributary streams, changed hydrologic regimes and water fluctuations, and other impacts upon the system caused by human activity.

Particular emphasis will be placed on identifying restoration activities that are delineated in the State of Illinois' **"Integrated Management Plan for the Illinois River Watershed"** recommendations. Such activities could include activities within the corridor of the river such as island creation, side channel restoration, protection and creation of wetlands, critical habitats, stream restoration and sedimentation control. In addition, the study will look for opportunities to partner with other State, Federal, and local entities to look for opportunities to restore land and water resources.

ALTERNATIVE PLANS CONSIDERED: The study will look at ways to partner with State, Federal, and local entities to address alternatives in four broad categories.

- (1) Watershed/Tributary Restoration - evaluate options to address tributary degradation and instability looking at stream and wetlands restoration, water retention, conservation easements, and riparian buffers.
- (2) Side Channel and Backwater Restoration - consider opportunities to restore aquatic habitats in these areas including off-channel deep water habitat, backwater lakes, side channels, islands, etc.
- (3) Water Level Management - evaluate options to reduce rapid fluctuations and naturalize flows.
- (4) Floodplain Restoration and Protection - evaluate floodplain use, potential restoration of floodplain function, and value and potential for acquisition of conservation easements.

VIEWS OF THE SPONSOR: The State of Illinois and the Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, have executed the Feasibility Cost-Sharing Agreement to conduct the 4-year Feasibility Study. The study will be a \$5.24 million effort. Related to the study, the Illinois Lt. Governor's Coordinating Council has begun an Illinois Rivers 2020 Initiative. The goal of Illinois 2020 is to achieve a \$2.5 billion program to restore and enhance the Illinois River Basin. The implementation of efforts from the Illinois Ecosystem Study are a component of this effort.

VIEWS OF FEDERAL, STATE, AND REGIONAL AGENCIES: Preliminary coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service indicates support of the project.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE: | Initiate Reconnaissance Study | Sept 1998 |
| | Initiate Feasibility Study | October 2000 |
| | Complete Feasibility Study | December 2003 |

POINTS OF CONTACT:

State of Illinois: Jim Mick, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois River Watershed Coordinator, 309/543-3316.

Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District: Brad Thompson, Project Manager, 309/794-5256.